

Festive D&D Holiday Adventures by Luddleston

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Summary:

Or, How Kallia Saved Christmas: the Myth, the Legend

(by Kallia)

Festive D&D Holiday Adventures

Author's Note:

- For [Eilera](#).

Happy Secret Santa to Elly and Merry Christmas to my entire lovely D&D group!

Millard kicked the door open, which was her preferred method of entering doors, hauling a bedraggled pine tree over her shoulders. The slam was appropriately dramatic, and the icy wind that followed the four of them inside the old stone windmill was also appropriately dramatic, and the only thing that would make this better would be if Kallia had some sort of pedestal to stand on and triumphantly announce their return.

Granted, there were only four people in the windmill to announce their return to, and two of them looked like they had just been asleep on the couch, because they were small children and it was past their bedtime. Ismark was fully awake and glaring at anyone who had the gall to make a lot of noise around sleeping children, and Ireena hadn't yet noticed them, because she was knitting something, and that took much more attention than whatever "the squad," as Daera called them, was up to. Benji cawed from the top of the pine tree. Millard attempted to set it upright, but the tip swayed under the weight of the small but not insignificantly-sized raven.

"Gather 'round, good people," Kallia called, like she was a town herald announcing the time of day, which had to happen a lot in Barovia, because of the lack of, you know, sun. "And I shall tell you the tale of our epic journey."

"You were gone for three hours," said Ismark, as though an epic journey couldn't happen within that timespan. What little he knew.

She gathered the children to her, seating the three of them on the overstuffed couch they had brought into the windmill. Ismark had put a lot of effort into furnishing the place so that it no longer looked like it used to

house a bunch of witches and a super shady baking operation. Kallia had put in exactly no effort, but enjoyed the results of Ismark's work.

Frek and Myrtle had become accustomed to Kallia telling them tales of their adventures whenever they made their way back to the windmill, and this time, she had a doozy for them. She cleared her throat and considered where to begin. Millard lured Benji down from the top of the tree with some dried cranberries. Frek and Myrtle waited with wide, round eyes. Ireena may or may not have noticed their presence yet.

"This," Kallia began, "is the story of how Kallia saved Christmas."

— — —

It all began on a snowy afternoon as Kallia and her intrepid crew of sidekicks journeyed from the super cool windmill that they owned to find the perfect Christmas tree. The forest was full of many towering pine trees, all of which Daera wanted to bring inside, but, as Kallia pointed out with her genius skills of observation, none of those would fit through the door.

"Kallia, I told you that."

Okay, so Qiris helped.

As they ventured deeper into the forest, it got darker and darker, well, not literally, but that does provide some atmosphere. Benji flew overhead, cawing at them, but he had eaten Daera's snack earlier, so she refused to cast *Speak With Animals* to ask him what his deal was.

His deal was that they were walking right into an ambush, set up by some nasty bandits who wanted to take advantage of whatever poor, waylaid Christmas tree hunters wandered into their corner of the woods. Thankfully, Kallia was not your average poor, waylaid Christmas tree hunter. For a start, she had more knives.

The bandits jumped out of the forest at them, but Kallia was ready for a fight. She leapt into action like a total badass, their strikes missing her because they were not badasses.

"They missed you because I blocked them with my shield," said Millard.

"Stop saying 'ass' around the kids," said Ismark.

The kids were huddled together, listening intently for the results of the fight, even though they clearly won, because they were safe and sound in the windmill.

The fight was chaos. Millard swung her sword around. Daera did some magic. Qiris also did some magic. Kallia did all kinds of cool leaps and combat rolls, and then she stabbed one of the bandits in the di—

"No. No. Please don't tell them that part," Qiris said. The children had been through a lot, including witnessing the agonizing, utterly weird death of the witches who had imprisoned them, but Qiris was probably right. Kallia was gonna tell Ireena about stabbing the bandit in the dick later, though.

—in the... somewhere. She stabbed them in somewhere not lethal, but they were so scared of how cool she was and of her shiny silver daggers that they went running off into the woods, crying and screaming but definitely okay and alive and not murdered. Better?

"Better," Qiris decided.

As they continued, they discovered a tree that was perfect. It was the right size to fit in the windmill, and it was definitely full of Christams magic. Kallia totally spotted it and pointed it out to everyone, because that's how you save Christmas.

The problem with this tree was not the beautiful branches, perfect for hanging garland on, or the nice big trunk for arranging presents around. It was the occupant. As soon as Millard got near the tree with an axe, a squirrel came bursting out of the branches and started making all kinds of angry squirrel noises at a bunch of perfectly good people who were just trying to save Christmas. They didn't even have bandit blood all over them, because Qiris did that spell to clean them up and also they definitely didn't kill any bandits.

But, because Kallia is an excellent and lucky person, her best friend is a druid, and can be convinced to talk to squirrels on the promise of baked goods that Kallia was totally going to get Ireena to make for her.

The kids laughed, and Ireena perked up at the sound of her name, only to frown when she realized somebody had promised Daera cookies on her behalf, and she halfheartedly tossed a ball of yarn in Kallia's direction. Kallia caught it and threw it right back in Ireena's yarn basket. Dexterity, bitches.

So, Daera did her super cool druid sh—stuff, and started talking to the squirrel, and the squirrel said, 'oh wow, when you walked up here, I didn't realize how awesome and badass you were, but now I have to know all the things about Kallia, because she is the most interesting person in the world.'

Kallia pitched her voice up high for the squirrel, talking in an even fancier accent than her usual, and Frek laughed and nearly rolled off the couch. Ismark noticed and nudged him back to the center of the cushions.

"That is super not what happened," Daera said, from where she was prodding at the tree. "That squirrel was an asshole. Or. Uh. A very bad person." The correction of her language for the kids was a little late.

"What did it actually say?" Myrtle asked.

"It actually said what I said it did," Kallia said, but she only got a pair of suspicious looks in return.

"He said that the tree belonged to him, and if we tried to chop it down, he'd bite all of our fingers off." Daera shook her head. "I mean, I get it, it's your house, but you could say it nicely. People don't have manners these days." She shook her head and started muttering about the lack of politeness around the forest creatures nowadays.

And so, their trek continued. By now, it was really cold, but they toughed it out. Kallia didn't even ask Millard for a piggyback ride until the snow was up to her knees. They walked for so long that they were no longer in the woods, and the wilderness around them turned into farmland.

That was when Kallia saw it. The perfect tree. It was tall, but not too tall, with full, fluffy branches that only had a little dusting of snow, and there was already a garland wrapped around it like it was ready and waiting to go in somebody's living room.

"Success!" Kallia cheered, jumping off of Millard's shoulders and running to the tree. She lifted it up and single-handedly hauled it back to the windmill, so that she could bring Christmas joy and cheer to all the windmill-dwelling children in the land.

She was pretty sure Frek and Myrtle were the only windmill-dwelling children in the land.

And that, my friends, is the story of how Kallia saved Christmas.

The end.

The children burst into applause, and so did Ireena, who had finished her knitting and started listening to the story. Ismark looked suspiciously over Kallia's shoulder at the tree they'd brought in, which, while tall enough to be a proper Christmas tree, was sort of scraggly and missing a few branches, almost devoid of needles and still tilting a bit sideways at the top.

"Are you sure that's what happened?" he asked, looking between Kallia and the tree and back again.

"Of course that's not what happened," said Qiris, who had no sense of Christmas magic. "The tree we found had a garland made of popcorn and cranberries, and so Benji ate it."

"Listen, my son only wanted to get himself a snack," Daera said, patting Benji on the head. She seemed to have forgotten that Benji had already stolen her snack that morning. "He was just being resourceful."

"We got chased off by the farmer who owned the tree," Millard explained. She'd finally gotten their second-choice tree standing up, and was wiping sap off her hands. "So, we had to go find another tree, and this one is..."

well..." She barely brushed it, and a few of the drooping, brown branches dropped their needles, scattering them all over the floor.

Qiris brushed some fallen pine needles off of her pants. "But we have a plan," she said, gesturing toward Daera, who was trying to get Benji to wear a tiny Santa hat.

"Oh! Right!" Daera finished affixing the hat to Benji and turned to face the tree. "Alright, guys, stand back and prepare for some Christmas magic." She lifted her hands, and as she did, the branches of the tree lifted, too, spreading out and re-growing once-dead and brown needles. Bunches of holly and ivy sprouted all around the room, and a cluster of mistletoe appeared right over Ismark's head.

The tree now looked just as picture-perfect as the one they'd tried to steal from the farm, maybe even a little more green, thanks to Daera's plant growth. The kids were staring wide-eyed and jumping up and down on the couch, because, hey, Daera's magic was pretty impressive. But Kallia still had something up her sleeve.

Literally.

"Is everybody ready for me to save Christmas again?" Kallia asked, even though Christmas seemed to be doing just fine on its own, thank you, and did not need saved any more.

The kids cheered anyways, and Kallia flung her cloak aside to reveal the secret stash of brightly colored ornaments she had been carrying with her so that she could show them off at the most dramatic moment. The kids cheered again, while her compatriots looked at each other with mounting suspicion.

"You stole those, didn't you," Daera didn't bother phrasing it like a question, just stage-whispered it at Kallia, who shrugged.

"They may have come free of charge," she said. "They were uh, a gift. An unintentional gift. On the gifter's part."

"Nice." Daera fist-bumped her before wandering off to put more plants all around the place.

They spent the rest of the night decorating the tree with Kallia's spoils, Ireena's latest knitting project (tiny snowflake-shaped doilies), and a new popcorn garland that Qiris and Millard made Benji promise not to eat until after Christmas. By the end of it, the tree was sparkling in the light of the fire, and the main floor of the windmill looked like it belonged on a Christmas card—a nice one, like the kind you'd send your grandma.

Once the windmill looked properly festive and more than one bottle of Wizard Lizard wine had been opened, they all sat around the fire again, and Kallia (in self-defense, because Millard had drunk enough of the wine to start singing orcish carols) started up another story.

"Alright, so this is the story of how Kallia got killed by a vampire queen but ended up coming back victoriously—"

"Absolutely not." Qiris clearly remembered how much nudity and stabbing that story had.

"Ahem. Alright, so this is the story of the wonderful adventures of the Sisters Banks, Sasha and Tyra, who are fabulously wealthy princesses and masters of the art of persuasion."

"And chess champions," Daera added.

"And chess champions," Kallia corrected herself. "So, it all started when Sasha and Tyra went to a huge wedding party with their mom, the Regentess of Somewheresville, and their other sister, Millard, who did not want a code name. It began on a lovely night, before Barovia got to be such a hot mess, two days before the wedding of a prince and a girl who ate all the snacks..."